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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the effect of parent and teacher consultation used in conjunction with group counseling on the classroom behavior of first, second, third, and fourth grade children. The instruments selected were in conjunction with the primary purpose of the study; the effect of various counseling approaches on children's classroom behavior. Thus, two instruments were chosen; one the teachers would use to evaluate the children's changes in behavior (Walker, 1968-Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist) and a second an objective classroom observer would use to rate children's behavior (Spaulding, 1968-Coping Analysis Schedule for Educational Settings (CASES). The hypothesis that there would be no significant differences among Group Counseling/Parent-Teacher Consultation, Group Counseling, Parent-Teacher Consultation, and Control Group Procedures was not accepted. Results suggest that Parent-Teacher Consultation was the most effective strategy used in the modification of classroom behavior and that CASES was the most valid and accurate measure of behavior change. (Author/SES)

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THE USE OF C A S E S IN THE EVALUATION OF THREE COUNSELING APPROACHES WITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Over the years there have been numerous attempts by counselors and researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling with elementary and secondary school students, with the vast and various results demonstrating that evaluation remains a very difficult and enormous task. Counselors are consistently confronted with the problem of selecting instruments and methods of evaluation that will most easily and efficiently assess the results of certain counseling procedures or therapuetic plans. In addition, with persistent public out-cry for the schools to be accountable and show the results of the educational process on children, another source of pressure arises for the counselor to demonstrate his utility and value as a part of the educational team.

Considering the present trends in education, there is no more important or critical time than now for counselors to select and utilize those methods of evaluation that have been shown to be both reliable and valid in measuring changes in student behavior due to counseling. The counselor may question, "If the above statement is true, then what sort of evaluation should counselors be doing?" It is the observation and feeling of this writer, that the most important counseling outcomes are changes in the classroom behavior of the student that will assist the student in performing more adequately in the classroom socially and academically. Classroom behavior is of paramount importance, since behavioral change in a treatment environment may not manifest itself

observable behavioral change within the classroom.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the effect of parent and teacher consultation used in conjunction with group counseling on the classroom behavior of first, second, third, and fourth grade children. The investigator thought it was imperative to select instruments that were in conjunction with the primary purpose of the study--the effect of various counseling approaches on children's classroom behavior. With this in mind, two instruments were chosen by the investigator; one the teachers would use to evaluate the children's changes in behavior (Walker, 1968) and a second in which objective classroom observers would use to rate children's behavior (Spaulding, 1968). The investigator felt that the ultimate test of the validity of the counseling approaches was to observe their effects upon the classroom behavior of children.

METHOD

Sample

The subjects in this study were 56 elementary school children randomly selected from a population of children exhibiting classroom adjustment problems in the first, second, third, and fourth grades of two West Virginia city schools. The children exhibited such adjustment problems as low class involvement, acting out, and low academic achievement.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to measure the teachers' and classroom observers' rating of classroom behavior in order to determine which treatment, if any, would have significant effect on the classroom behavior. The two instruments were developed from actual classroom situations, and their measures do reflect the classroom situation as

seen by teachers and classroom observers.

The Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist (BC) is a 50-item, "yes-no" checklist that identifies in behaviorally descriptive terms, the most frequently occurring classroom adjustment problems exhibited by children, as rated by the classroom teacher. On the BC, the lower the score, the fewer classroom adjustment problems being exhibited by the children.

The Coping Analysis Schedule for Educational Settings (CASES) is designed to measure the pupils' attempts to cope with the school environment. It is a category system arranged with the more active coping categories (aggressive behavior, attention-getting, directing others) grouped at one end and the more passive (daydreaming, withdrawal, passive avoidance) at the other. CASES permits the coding of all behaviors observed in the classroom into 1 or another of 18 categories separated into appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. The higher the scores on the CASES, the fewer classroom adjustment problems being exhibited by the children.

Procedures

Teachers in eight classrooms were asked to complete the BC for the 10 children in their classrooms exhibiting the greatest adjustment problems. It was explained to the teachers that children having adjustment problems included those exhibiting overt behavior problems, those who had withdrawn from social interaction with other children or adults, and those having academic difficulties. Of the 10 children selected by each of the eight teachers, 7 were randomly chosen to participate in the treatment designated for the classroom. The investigator made no attempt to balance the groups with regard to overt and covert problems;

However, each group turned out to be heterogeneous because the teachers had selected children with an array of problems.

Each of the 56 children was rated for 35 to 45 minutes a day for five days by classroom observers using the CASES. The eight observers were teachers attending graduate school and trained in the use of CASES. To test for reliability, the investigators had each observer make 10-second interval recordings of the behavior they had observed in 10-minute videotapes of second and third grade children. The overall average of agreement among the observers for these videotapes was 86.33 percent.

The four classes in each school were randomly assigned to one of the treatment and control groups. Two grades (grade three from School A and grade one from School B) were assigned to the Group Counseling/Parent-Teacher Consultation Procedure; two grades (grade four from School A and grade three from School B) were assigned to the Group Counseling Procedure; two grades (grade one from School A and grade two from School B) were assigned to the Parent-Teacher Consultation Procedure; and two grades (grade two from School A and grade four from School B) were assigned to the Control Group Procedure.

Treatment Procedures

After pretesting, the four treatment groups followed the procedures described below.

1. Group Counseling/Parent-Teacher Consultation Procedure (GC/PTC). The children met as a group twice a week for 12 sessions with a counselor, with each session lasting approximately one-half hour. Two counselors were used for the total treatment period, one counselor working in each school.

During the six-week treatment period a counselor met with the children's parents every other week at their homes and with teachers twice a week. Parents were consulted in their homes to insure that all parents would be consulted three times and also to allow them to meet in the convenient and relaxed atmospheres of their own homes.

2. Group Counseling Procedure (GC).

The children met as a group twice a week for 12 sessions with a counselor, with each session lasting approximately one-half hour. The same group counseling approach with the children was used as in the GC/PTC Procedure except that the parent and teachers of these children were not consulted.

3. Parent-Teacher Consultation Procedure (PTC).

The children in this procedure did not meet as a group during the six-week treatment period, but a counselor met with their parents every other week and with their teachers twice a week. The consultation procedures were the same as those used in the GC/PTC Procedure.

4. Control Group Procedure (Control).

The children met as a group twice a week for 12 sessions with a counselor with each session lasting approximately one-half hour. The counselor did not use group counseling techniques, however, but permitted the children to read in the library, play games, or draw.

After the treatment period, posttesting of the 56 children was completed by the teachers and observers, using the BC and the

CASES. The same procedures were followed as those used in pretesting, except that the classroom observers did not return to the same classrooms observed during pretesting.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study was that there would be no significant differences in adjusted posttest score means among the treatment groups and the control group, as measured by the Behavior Checklist (Walker, 1968) and the Coping Analysis Schedule for Educational Settings (Spaulding, 1967).

Design data analysis and results

The experimental design was a pretest/treatment/posttest design with random assignment of subjects. The differences between pretest and posttest scores on the BC and the CASES were analyzed by the use of analysis of covariance (Winer, 1962) to determine the main effect of each treatment on the adjustment of elementary school children. Pretest scores on both dependent measures were used as covariates. When significant F ratios were found, the t-test was used to determine the location of the difference. The .05 level of significance was used in all F and t comparisons.

The analysis of covariance indicated that there was a significant difference ($F = 3.10$) among the treatment and control groups in relation to adjusted posttest means on the BC with all other F ratios being nonsignificant. Further examination of the data revealed that the PTC Procedure had a significantly lower adjusted mean on the BC than the GC/PTC Procedure ($t = 2.11$) and the Control ($t = 4.39$) but was not significantly different from the GC Procedure ($t = 1.77$). The data therefore indicate that the PTC Procedure was the superior treatment according to teacher reports on the BC.

Further comparisons among the treatment groups indicated that the GC/PTC Procedure and the GC Procedure were not significantly different ($t = .26$), although both had significantly lower adjusted means on the BC than the Control ($t = 2.27$ and $t = 2.62$, respectively). The result suggests that all treatments employed were superior to at least the Control as rated by the teachers.

The analysis of covariance indicated that there was a significant difference ($F = 4.71$) among the treatment and control groups in relation to adjusted posttest means on the CASES. The data reveal that the PTC Procedure had a significantly higher mean on the CASES than either the GC/PTC Procedure ($t = 4.16$), the GC Procedure ($t = 6.70$), or the Control ($t = 4.96$). Also, the GC/PTC Procedure had a significantly higher mean than the GC Procedure ($t = 2.25$); however, neither procedure was significantly different from the Control ($t = .79$ and $t = 1.74$, respectively). The data therefore suggest that the PTC Procedure was superior to other treatments and the Control according to objective classroom observers using the CASES.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The hypothesis that there would be no significant differences among (a) Group Counseling/Parent-Teacher Consultation, (b) Group Counseling, (c) Parent-Teacher Consultation, and (d) Control procedures was not accepted. Results of the study suggest that the Parent-Teacher Consultation Procedure was the most effective strategy used in the modification of classroom behavior as measured by the BC and the CASES.

It seems evident from the findings of this study that guidance personnel will have to examine carefully their roles in the school to

determine when and where they can be most effective. It can be noted from this study that the most effective means of changing children's behavior may not always be through dealing with them directly. The time and money presently being spent on teacher, parent, student, and counselor consulting programs may not be adequate. If further research supports the findings of this study, drastic changes in the guidance programs of many schools may be necessary, changing the nature of counseling from the counselor-student orientation to the milieu approach involving the parent, teacher, child, and counselor.

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF THE BC AND CASES

The above report was presented to provide the reader with the specifics of the investigation conducted to establish a background of information regarding the utilization of the BC and the CASES as measurement instruments in this one particular research project. At this point in the paper, the investigator will take the opportunity to relate his findings regarding these instruments as possible research tools in further counseling research. A point by point discussion of each instrument will follow.

Behavior Checklist

1. The one distinct advantage of the BC (and some other behavior checklists available) was that it enabled the teachers to behaviorally describe the problems exhibited by the children in their classrooms. It has been the experience of the investigator that too often teachers refer a child to the counselor without an adequate description of the child's difficulty or difficulties because they are unable to describe verbally exactly what the child is doing or not doing. With this

thought in mind, the BC is recommended to counselors for use with teachers in assisting them in the identification of children's problem areas.

2. In addition to assisting the teachers in behaviorally describing the children, the BC provided the counselors with adequate information to determine behavioral goals for counseling. With the information from the BC the counselors could orient their group counseling or consulting toward specific therapeutic plans that would assist the child in adapting and functioning in the classroom. Knowing what the child does specifically in the classroom is of enormous assistance to the counselor in determining counseling goals.

3. One of the serious drawbacks of the BC, as observed in the study, was the instrument's inability to truly discriminate between those children who were given adequate therapeutic assistance that actually changed classroom behaviors and those who were not assisted significantly. Each teacher in the study reported positive changes in their children's behavior (not always a significant positive change) regardless of the treatment procedure utilized. Control group children were reported as changing positively (at times significantly) as well as the children in the other procedure. Although the BC was of assistance in identifying behavior problems, it did not adequately serve as a valid evaluation tool for the measurement of actual classroom behavior changes.

Coding Analysis Schedule for Educational Settings

1. The most outstanding characteristic of the instrument was that it directly measures or quantifies the classroom behavior of children. With the use of CASES the investigators could directly relate teachers' reports of children's behaviors with actual observation to give a complete

profile of the children as they operated in the classroom situation.

2. With the use of CASES, the counselor and teacher were able to objectify and categorize the behaviors of the children to promote further understanding of the children's behavior. Using the CASES information, the counselor was able to direct his counseling more specifically toward the problem areas of the children. In conjunction with the BC the CASES observations provided a powerful and very complete analysis of the children.

3. Actual utilization of the CASES in the classroom demonstrated that: (a) the instrument can be utilized with little difficulty during actual classroom activities; (b) one observer can rate and observe as many as three children during one observation period; and (c) the greatest difficulty in utilizing the instrument in a school situation is finding adequate staff with enough time to observe the children during classroom activities.

4. The most impressive outcome of the investigation of the CASES results was the discrimination power of the instrument in determining those children who had changed their classroom behavior and those who had not. Rating of the children with CASES demonstrated that not all the children changed positively as reported by teachers, but that some had changed negatively and some made no change at all as a result of the treatment procedures. CASES seemed to be a valid and accurate measure of <u>actual</u> changes in the children's behavior in the classroom and was not influenced by the experimenter or Rosenthal Effect.

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FOOTNOTES

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